

Mentoring the “Best and Brightest” in Maternal Fetal Medicine

All of us that have the privilege of participating in the medical and psychosocial care of mothers and babies recognize the importance of an influential teacher and mentor. In fact, most of us were likely drawn to the field of obstetric medicine from experiences shared with an outstanding professor or role model.

The future of our specialty depends on the continuing cultivation of these important teaching mentoring relationships. We have an obligation to our future patients to recruit, train, and retain the “best and the brightest” students and residents to our field of medicine. As teachers therefore, where should we focus our efforts in order to optimally train our future generation of obstetric specialists? In the United States, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) proposes that we center our training efforts on six balanced resident physician competencies. The six competencies include:

- Patient Care,
- Medical Knowledge,
- Practice-based Learning and Improvement,
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills,
- Professionalism and System-based Practice.

ACGME (2007) Competency-based Goals and Objectives

1. Patient Care

Residents must be able to provide patient care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health.

2. Medical Knowledge

Residents must demonstrate knowledge of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiological and social-behavioral sciences, as well as the application of this knowledge to patient care.

3. Practice-based Learning and Improvement

Residents must demonstrate the ability to investigate and evaluate their care of patients, appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and to continuously improve patient care based on constant self-evaluation and life-long learning. Residents are expected to develop skills and habits to be able to meet the following goals:

1. Identify strengths, deficiencies, and limits in one's knowledge and expertise;
2. Set learning and improvement goals;
3. Identify and perform appropriate learning activities;
4. Systematically analyze practice, using quality improvement methods, and implement changes with the goal of practice improvement;
5. Incorporate formative evaluation feedback into daily practice;
6. Locate, appraise, and assimilate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health problems;
7. Use information technology to optimize learning; and
8. Participate in the education of patients, families, students, residents and other health professionals.

4. Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Residents must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effectively exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals. Residents are expected to:

1. Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, as appropriate across a broad range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds;
2. Communicate effectively with physicians, other health professionals, and health related agencies;
3. Work effectively as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group;
4. Act in a consultative role to other physicians and health professionals; and
5. Maintain comprehensive, timely, and legible medical records, if applicable.

5. Professionalism

Residents must demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, and an adherence to ethical principles. Residents are expected to demonstrate:

1. Compassion, integrity, and respect for others;
2. Responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest;

3. Respect for patient privacy and autonomy;
4. Accountability to patients, society and the profession; and
5. Sensitivity and responsiveness to a diverse patient population, including but not limited to diversity in gender, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities, and sexual orientation.

6. Systems-based Practice

Residents must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care, as well as the ability to call effectively on other resources in the system to provide optimal health care. Residents are expected to:

1. Work effectively in various health care delivery settings and systems relevant to their clinical specialty;
2. Coordinate patient care within the health care system relevant to their clinical specialty;
3. Incorporate considerations of cost awareness and risk-benefit analysis in patient and/or population-based care, as appropriate;
4. Advocate for quality patient care and optimal patient care systems;
5. Work in interprofessional teams to enhance patient safety and improve patient care quality; and
6. Participate in identifying system errors and in implementing potential systems solutions.

This approach to educating our resident physicians provides us with appropriate tools, as mentors and teachers, to facilitate a well rounded, balanced, professional education for our future generations of obstetric care providers. Interestingly, as the well-mentored resident physician leaves training and begins practice they are more than just "competent" they are the "Best and the Brightest" and will become outstanding mentors in their own right! My congratulations to Professor Giorlandino and staff for their efforts to make this Journal an outstanding resource for mentors and students alike. From this effort the "Best and the Brightest" may be mentored!

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